



Meeting with the City of Beloit
Thursday, September 2, 2004, 10:00 – 11:30am

People in attendance

Sandra Beaupre, WisDOT BOP
Casey Newman, WisDOT BOP
Arun Rao, WisDOT BOP
Chris Walsh, Department of Public Works, Operations, and Transit
Mike Flesch, City Engineer
Jason Dupuis, Transportation Engineer
Julie Christensen, Community Development Director
Bob Soltau, State Line Area Transportation Study (SLATS) Coordinator
Barb Feeny, WisDOT District 1

- 1) Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The meeting began at 10:00 with introductions. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan *Connections 2030*. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from larger Wisconsin cities at this point. *Connections 2030* is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
- 2) Gathering of input from City of Beloit: Staff from the City of Beloit answered the following questions and gave WisDOT a copy of the City of Beloit Transit Development Plan completed in July 2004, an informational brochure on the Gateway Business Park, the Stateline Area Bike and Pedestrian System Plan, and a City of Beloit and Vicinity map.
 - a. Current transportation and development issues in Beloit.

Road Improvements and Traffic Issues

- Beloit staff emphasized the need for a realignment of the I43 and I90 interchange. Beloit would like it relocated north to Hart Road.
- The city proposes commercial development along the old I43 corridor and removing access control for local access. The old interchange would stay as a diamond access to Highway 81 and I90. Staff proposes bypass/auxiliary lanes to the new interchange slightly north of Highway 43.
- The City of Beloit would like to extend Gateway Blvd. to Hart Road.

- Highway S (to Highway G) will become a major collector, and will require a new bridge, again to avoid a new interchange at Townline Road. This will prevent the interstate from being used for local traffic.
- A Westside bypass of Beloit along Highway 81 is a priority for the next five years. It is funded, but Illinois is holding up the process. Beloit would like the bypass built at least to the state line in order to take traffic out of the city, improve circulation, and decrease the use of the interstate as a local road.
- The City of Beloit would like to see an extension of Inman Parkway to eliminate the need for an interchange at Town Line Road and I90. An extended Inman Parkway would be a connector. Beloit staff noted traffic problems on Inman Parkway and emphasized the need for an extension of the road. The City staff stated they need help from WisDOT to build a bridge to avoid building the interchange proposed at Townline Road. The extension would provide a connection to an industrial area (where Caterpillar is located).
- City staff believe that Rock County needs to upgrade Highway G (Prairie Ave.).
- Highway 81/Perryville Road parallels the interstate all the way from Beloit to Rockford. Parts of this route (an alternative to the interstate) are currently under construction.
- Shopiere Road will be widened from 2 lanes to 4 lanes in 2006.
- Beloit staff stated that Downtown access is a problem. Beloit would like to see Illinois 75/ US 51 be the main route to downtown because Highway 81/White Road can't be widened. Signs on I90 are needed to implement this.

Other Traffic Issues

- The percent of trucks vs. cars is increasing on the interstate (25-30% truck according to Beloit staff observations). Truck traffic is increasing; there are no lulls on the interstate any longer.
- Traffic from the west into Beloit is increasing.

Transit:

- Beloit would like to see Metra extended to Clinton, and open up Northeast Illinois as an employment corridor for Beloit. Beloit helped fund the Clinton Metra extension study.
- Beloit is also backing a Metra extension to Belvidere/Rockford. They would eventually like to see it extended to Beloit.
- The city wants to establish bi-state transit services to connect to Rockford, but the MPO in Illinois is short of money. Rockford supports this transit initiative, but S. Beloit, Rockton, and Roscoe are reluctant. Staff stated that they need a countywide mass transit district with a dedicated revenue source. The State of Wisconsin doesn't currently allow for this. City staff emphasized the need for a bi-state district. Currently, Beloit transit can't go across the state-line. State-

level statutory authority is needed for bi-state and county transit districts. Illinois has a bi-state agreement in statute, Wisconsin doesn't. Wisconsin needs companion legislation to the Illinois law. Contact Joanne Schroeder for more information on the Illinois agreement.

- ***Transit Center*** – A multimodal transit center is planned for downtown Beloit in 2006. It is in city plans to be funded, but is still currently in the concept stage. It is a public private venture. The center would include public buses, taxis, UPS, childcare, and private shops. Everyone would pay to use it. City staff would also like to bring in intercity buses to the center. The center would be located downtown next to a bike path.
- Beloit Transit is moving from fixed routes to on-demand services starting this year, which is a major culture change. Beloit staff stated that the current transit system is not effective
- The Beloit-Janesville Express bus service makes money. This is one reason why Beloit wants to extend services south. Staff stated that businesses would pay to bring Beloit transit south.
- City staff pointed out the lack of public transit to Milwaukee.

E&D

The City of Beloit provides para-transit service. Staff stated that a countywide system would make much more sense, because passengers need to go outside Beloit to Janesville (for county services, etc.). Staff emphasized that the county, not the city, should provide E&D.

Land Use Issues and Planning

- Growth on the west side of Beloit is mainly subdivisions and housing. The east side is industrial and commercial, with some residential.
- The Chicago growth area is spreading north along I90. Staff emphasized the need to be prepared for this from a transportation standpoint.
- Beloit has close proximity to three major airports in the region. Beloit is only one hour and 15 minutes from O'Hare, one hour from Mitchell Field, and one hour from Dane County Airport.
- Many people from Beloit work at Woodfield (Schaumburg, IL). Joanne Schroeder has a study and information on where people in Beloit work.
- There are signs that development near I90 (Gateway Center) will be distribution centers. Residential development has started also, with some large subdivisions under development.
- There is a bi-state planning model for Boone, Winnebago, and Beloit areas. Staff noted that South Beloit, IL doesn't have many plans at all.
- Beloit recently completed a bike and pedestrian plan.

Gateway Center

- The development is located east of I90 and south of I43 to the state line. There is a land use plan for the area completed in 1998, but since then the plan has become irrelevant because new zoning has been adopted for the area. Development in the area is now developer driven.
- The railway line through Gateway has 3–4 trains per day. Beloit suggests buying land now for a Park and Ride (for future passenger rail service) at the Hart Road or Shopiere Road interchanges.
- Cranston Road was extended over the interstate in order to take local traffic off of the interstate. Now there is a connection with Cranston Road to Gateway Blvd. This leads to Highway 75 and I90. The connection with Hart Rd. provides 2 interchanges to Gateway.
- Right now the Gateway Center is somewhat landlocked by the two interstates without any access, so Beloit wants the I43/I90 interchange shifted to the north, and a connection to Hart Road.